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LITTLE WORLD OF MATRIMONY. BY HOWARD FIELDING.

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When Mr. Frost came to the portal of the Ann street bank building where in his offices were located, he observed that some workmen were repairing the roof of the vestibule. It is a unique structure, unlike anything else in New York. Mr. Frost, being an architect, was peculiarly sensible of its absurdity. It looked to him as if the builders had tried to carry a classic marble tomb into the modern structure and had got stuck with it half way through the front door.

Considering the weight of the slabs which formed the main part of the vestibule's roof, Mr. Frost was of the opinion that they ought not to be disturbed while people were passing in and out beneath. This opinion, however, was entirely professional. Personally he did not care whether the laborers did or did not drop 500 pounds of marble on his head, whence we conclude that Mr. Frost was not happy.

Recently he had stood it about as long as he could. The trouble did not seem to be that he had lost the girl, but that he could not stop thinking about her. When their engagement was broken, he was able to say to himself that the act was wise; that she would be happier as the wife of somebody else and he as the husband of nobody at all. Of course Miss Elton was a very attractive girl, with a face that simply wouldn't get out of a fellow's mind, and a lot of the prettiest ways—Con found it! Why had he ever met her? Why couldn't he stop worrying and get back to work? Must he resort to travel in far lands, as lovers in novels usually do?

On this particular day the desire

could be turned by force properly applied. His own position prevented him from putting much power into the effort, for in pushing upon the partition that some workmen were repairing the roof of the vestibule, he had nothing to brace himself against except the partition behind structure, unlike anything else in New York. Mr. Frost, being an architect, was peculiarly sensible of its absurdity. It looked to him as if the builders had tried to carry a classic marble tomb into the modern structure and had got stuck with it half way through the front door.

Meanwhile the situation was inexorably embarrassing. Dozens of men who knew Mr. Frost and Miss Elton and the main facts of their unfortunate love story were among the bank's customers or held offices in the building. A veritable procession of them might be expected at that hour in the forenoon. Fancy being shut up in a little glass walled cell with the girl to whom you used to be engaged and thus exposed to public view and the ridicule of your friends! It was not to be borne.

In the few seconds that were required for the situation to reveal itself to Frost a crowd had collected. It was still possible to pass in and out of the building, for on each side of the "revolver" there was an ordinary door, but most people seemed to prefer to halt and view the spectacle. Frost saw a uniformed watchman of the building, a giant and impressive creature, push his way through the throng within and apply his strength to the door. It did not move the sixteenth part of an inch. Frost shouted to him to get help from the workmen who were climbing down from the vestibule's roof, and the watchman replied reassuringly that it would be all right in half a minute.

Reluctantly relief must come from



"HERE WE ARE SHUT UP TOGETHER IN A CAGE."

overcome him. He wrote a few letters, without. It remained for these within seized his traveling bag and fled with to summon up their patience. Frost out much idea as to where he was going as a young man of remarkable self control.

In the lower hall of the building he "This must be very annoying to you," met Miss Elton. It was what he had said, "but of course it can't last long feared, for her uncle was cashiering. I think we should make the best of the bank, and she had to come down off it, and that suggests the idea that to see him often on errands for her you would better sit down."

He turned his dress suit case over his shoulder and placed it so that she could neither look at him. And have the end wall of the cell for a that is why they both tried to get out back.

First and both came together with a "Thank you," said she. "I shall not first in one of the compartments of the be so conspicuous if I sit down. But I'm afraid the door will begin to turn."

Frost perceived the catastrophe the "And I'm afraid that it won't," he re- tenth of a second too late. He stopped joined, laughing gently. "At any rate suddenly in the wild hope that he could hit me first, and I will give you back out. The door bumped against his wailing. Ah, here comes Paulsen!"

He threw his weight in the segment opposite the one in against the left behind him, but it was which Mr. Frost and Miss Elton were as immovable as an iron wall.

Immuned an elderly gentleman of rather "Why, what's the matter with their elegant appearance had been caught, thing?" he exclaimed.

"It's stuck," replied the girl feebly, to theirs. He was taking matters very That was the truth certainly. Frostedly, leaning against one of the par- segment was completely closed by one "Our neighbor is bearing it well," of the curved walls between which the said Frost, with the amiable intention door revolved. They were imprisoned of diverting his companion's thoughts, in a space just big enough to hold them. "He has the advantage of being Frost's first idea was that the shock alone," replied Miss Elton.

of the door had disarranged its mechanism. She had not meant to say anything of the door had never taken the trouble disarrangeable. Naturally she compared to find out just how these contrivances the man in the one compartment with were built, but he knew that the re- the man in the other. But the remark vowing partitions could be folded to- was susceptible of being taken another gether handily; so there was good pros- way. It cut Frost's heart right in two, peep of immediate release.

"Yet are ungrateful to Providence," Indeed it was probable that the door said he gently. "Think of the extreme

lucidity of our present association and of the much longer one that you have escaped."

Forgetting that she had been the original aggressor, Miss Elton proceeded to get even with Frost for reverting to an unpleasant topic.

"As you imply," said she, "this experience is comparable to matrimony. Here we are shut up together in a cage, each longing to get away and yet incapable of doing so."

"And Paulsen, who typifies the divorce court, is so dreadfully slow," rejoined Frost.

"These glass walls," said the girl, continuing the allegory, "are like the publicity of marriage. Married people are forever in the sight of all the world, and each must in effect declare at all times, 'This is the best partner I could get.'"

"As to that," responded Frost, "the remedy is to make a choice of which one can never be ashamed. I did so."

"Upon my word," said she, "you said nothing so polite as that in the old days."

"I thought you would like something of the kind," he replied, "and I tried very hard. People who are forced to be together should strive to be agreeable. That is, I fancy, the great and open secret of happiness in marriage."

"No one is so disagreeable," said she, "as the man who strains his naturally unamiable nature in the effort to be so and then immediately demands credit for it. That, I should suppose, would be the heaviest of a wife's burdens. Her husband is a bear—a polar bear, fierce and cold. Once in awhile he pulls in his claws and looks pleasant for about two minutes, and for the next hour, or week perhaps, he is always saying how hard he tried to please his wife."

"Would you like me to hurry Paulsen?" he asked.

"He represents the divorce court, doesn't he?" said she. "Yes; but all means appeal to him. There is an evident case here—of incompatibility of temper."

Frost called to Paulsen, and the machinist came close to the prison wall. "The trouble is not with the door," he said; "it is on top. The whole thing is cramped."

The roof of the vestibule had settled, perhaps as the result of some mismanagement of the repairs, and one of the supports was pressing down upon the door in such a way as to hold its four flanges immovable. Possibly the jar of the door's striking Frost's heel might have furnished the last pound of power that precipitated the catastrophe, or it might have been fate that timed it so nicely.

"The court," said Frost, "supposes that we have not been here long enough to gain a residence. Action on your petition is therefore postponed."

"And meanwhile," she replied, "all our friends know that we are anxious to part and cannot. There's Harry Window grinning through the glass, and he'll tell everybody. And, oh, there's uncle! Poor fellow, how sorry he will be for me!"

"That our friends should be amused and our near relatives grieved," said Frost, "is the inevitable result of these entanglements. However, let us be consoled. Your uncle will spend large sums to get us out of this."

"It will get into the papers!" she exclaimed. "I see a man writing some- thing in a notebook."

"There'll be an artist here presently," said Frost. "I wonder if they can photograph us through this glass."

They both laughed at the preposterous notion of their pictures being to- gether in the afternoon papers. Their merriment was interrupted by an out- burst from the other cell. The third prisoner was making a rumpus. His pa- tience had given out. His cigar was snuffed up, and, besides, he had gathered from Paulsen's statement that the situation was not without peril. He was threatening damage suits and personal violence.

Miss Elton caught some words of his which let her know the real cause of the trouble, and it frightened her. Singu- larly enough, she clasped Frost's hand with an impulsive grasp.

"Is it true," she cried, "that some- thing is wrong with the roof over us?"

"It is," said he, "but there is no real danger. If there were, they would break down the doors and release us."

He did not let her hand get away while he was speaking, and, indeed, she made no effort to withdraw it. Sudden- ly there were tears in her eyes.

"I am glad you are here!" she cried. "Of course I would not wish you to be in danger, but I should be so frighten- ed if I were alone."

"I think that we have been of some use to each other," he replied. "Even our quarrels have helped to pass away the time. Our friend in the other cage, who typifies the bachelor, began the ordeal more calmly than we did, but he has not held out as well. His inter- est is selfish, and that is the worst kind of unhappiness."

"Be careful, Jack," she whispered. "You are leading our little allegory to a strange conclusion."

"Let it lead where it will," he re- plied. "The fact is that all life is an ordeal which two can bear better than one."

She looked serious for a moment and then laughed happily, like a child.

"Tell Paulsen that I don't want to get out," said she. "The petition is withdrawn. You're a good fellow, Jack, and the harder the situation the better fellow you are. It is worth while to go through troubles for the sake of going through them with you."

Half an hour later, when the door decided to move, these two did not take advantage of their freedom. They went up to Grace's home and told her mother that they had made it all up. And while they told the story they were just as close together as in the narrow cell of wood and glass. But they had learned to like it.

WHAT PAW WOULD DO.

If paw could have his way, I bet that party wouldn't be so sure of his job. Would he some changes what would make the people stop and stare. They wouldn't be no horses then, exceptin only paw. And this would be the greatest world a body ever saw. They couldn't be no bills for gas nor tax for folks to pay. And paw would just be run for fun if paw could have his way.

If paw could have his way, I guess the grass could grow on quins. To have to mow it every day to keep things look- ing in style. And every time my shoes wore out they'd be an- other pair. Begin to sport right on to keep my feet from gettin bare. And paw, she'd set around and smile, without a word to say. But only when all the while if paw could have his way.

If paw could have his way, the men that's holdin office now wouldn't never start to do a thing till paw had said they'd better. They'd never go to war unless he said they ought to go. And they'd depend on him to show them how to treat the foe. The millionaires would every one be workin by the day. And paw'd have to have the chance, if paw could have his way.

If paw could only have his way, the winters would be hot. And in the summer time the snow would fly. I tell you what! The dry spells always would be wet, the wet spells they'd be dry. And when the sun was shinin clouds would spread across the sky. Then March would be October, and December would be May. And they'd be more Sunday mornings, too, if paw could have his way.

If paw could have his way, the crooks would cheer for him, I bet. And all the fashionable folks would want him in their set. The people that we know would all have less than we had them. And paw'd leave us out when they got parties up again. We'd have the best home on the street, and all the folks would say that they'd glad if they was us. If paw could have his way.

—S. E. Kiser in Chicago Times-Herald.

An Unusual Bonnet.



Husband—Some one at the restau- rant today started to carry off my over- coat, but I recognized it as he was passing by these two buttons that are missing.

Wife (in triumph)—And to whom are you indebted for the fact that the buttons were not sewed on?—Humor- istic Blatter.

On the Variety Stage.

The Gentleman in the Bald Wig—Awful affair at our hotel this after- noon. Cook got mad and cut the end of a waiter's nose off with a cleaver. But one of the guests fixed it all right.

The Gentleman Behind the Green Whiskers—How did one of the guests fix it all right?

"He gave the waiter another tip."

(Violent agitation of the base drum. Imitation of a dentist's office by the brass, the clarinet giving a faithful rendition of a bound pup with his tail caught in the barn door.)—Indianapolis Journal.

Conditions Changed.

"You used to say you couldn't love him if he were the last man in the world."

"Yes, I know."

"And yet you are engaged to be mar- ried to him. You have changed."

"No, not at all. You see, if he were the last man in the world there couldn't be this rich old uncle of his, who has come along and promised to leave him everything."—Chicago Times-Herald.

Suburban Experiences.

Hopwell—Living in the country now, I understand. What sort of a place is it?

Subbub—I really don't know. It takes me so long to get home that I never arrive till after dark, and I have to leave before daybreak to reach the office in time.—Philadelphia North American.

Puzzling.

"That man Oom Paul always was terribly hard to get along with," re- marked the European diplomat.

"He seems to be simplicity itself."

"Yes, but he doesn't conform to the ordinary rules of diplomacy. When- ever he says anything, he means every word of it."—Washington Star.

Uncertain.

"I can't quite make that young fel- low out," said the livery stable man.

"What puzzles you about him?"

"Why, he wants a very gentle horse, and I can't tell whether he's afraid of, or is going to take his best girl driving."—Chicago Post.

Feeling the Effect.

Sally Pikes—We's bin laughin round dis water tank for four hours, and der ain't no freight hove in sight yet.

Billy Coalgate—Now we knows how bad dis freight car famine is.—Chicago News.

In the Highlands o' Scotia.

Our Latest Millionaire (to Gille, who has brought him within close range of the finest stag in the forest)—I say, Mac, confound it all, which eye do you use?—Punch.

A Popular Attitude.

"How do you feel about these trusts?"

"If I can't get into one, I'm down on 'em."—Chicago Record.

WANTED TO BE ORIGINAL.

And Carnation Ann Plunkett Man- aged to Obtain Her Wish.

The sudden and heavy rains had swelled Crane creek beyond its banks, carried away its bridges and the mud, yellow torrent was sweeping along to the southward, bearing on its turbid bosom homopops, fences, smokehouses and a lot of driftwood too late to chastity.

It was the wedding day of Flavia Josephus Retroyd and Carnation Ann Plunkett, both of the Persinger neigh- borhood.

But the preacher had not come. It was on the other side of Crane creek. "Can't you get across?" shouted Flavia Josephus, who, with Carnation Ann, had ridden down to the water's edge on the right bank of the stream.

"No," yelled the preacher in re- sponse. "All the boats have been swept away."

There was a hurried conference be- tween the prospective bride and groom.

"Then they rode up to a point a hun- dred yards above, where the creek was narrower, spurred their horses into the raging torrent and landed safely a few moments later on the other shore."

"You're a pretty looking couple, you are," said the preacher as they dis- mounted and stood, all dripping, before him. "I could have married you across the creek. Why didn't you stay right where you were?"

"Because," replied Carnation Ann, with dilating nostrils, "that would have been such a chestnut!"—Chicago Trib- une.

Reflections of a Bachelor.

When you tell a woman you are sure of a thing, she can hardly ever help asking if you're sure you're sure.

The last reason in the average man's mind when he asks a woman to marry him is because he really wants her to.

When some girls sit under a big red lamp shade, they look almost as nice as speckled peaches do under a piece of pink mosquito netting.

You never think about a kiss from the way a girl fixes her mouth when she puts on her high collar.

If it weren't for love, there wouldn't be such a thing as poetry, and if it weren't for poetry there wouldn't be such a thing as love.—New York Press.

For His Wife's Sake.

"Don't let the media hear you allude to her as my better half," said Mr. Meekton behind his hand to the friend who had come to dinner.

"I understand. The expression is a trifle commonplace, not to say plebeian."

"It isn't that. But I wish you'd choose another fraction. It would annoy Heredita vastly to have you think she was less than four-fifths at the lowest calculation."—Washington Star.

Why She Blushed Unseen.

"I heard that young man who calls on Sister Rose quoting poetry about her name last night," said the bad boy.

"Hush!" exclaimed Sister Rose. "What did he say?" asked the bad boy's cousin bad brother.

"He said something about many a flower being born to blish unseen," an- swered the bad boy.

"He must have been kissing her in the dark," suggested the bad boy's brother.—Chicago Post.

A Crusher.

"Marry you?" the young woman scornfully exclaimed. "I wouldn't marry you if you were—"

"Jupiter Olympus, the czar of Russia or the count of Monte-Christo?" sarcas- tically interrupted the young man.

"No," she rejoined, with increasing scorn. "Not even if you were the man who sent Dewey to the Philippines!"—Chicago Tribune.

What's in a Name?

"Some one," announces the current issue of the Plunkville Eagle, "has thought to be smart and sent us a piece of poetry called an imitation of Horace, but we were not born yester- day, and we happen to know that the venerated and lamented Greeley never was a verse writer in his life."—In- dianapolis Journal.

A Reasonable Request.

"I wish, Adele, dear, that another time when you want to scold me be- fore the servants you'd do it in French, so they won't understand!"—Flegende Blatter.

All He Could See.

"What is it?" asked the man who was struggling to see what was taking place in the storm center of the crowd, indicated by the policeman's helmet hat. "What is it? Robbers?"

"No!" replied the disgrusted man who was trying to crowd his way out. "Robbers!"—Chicago Tribune.

A Good "Bluff."

"Look here," said the manager of the mining stock company. "We've got to keep up a bold front. How can we impress our correspondents that we are doing a rushing business?"

"We might stick our stamps on up- side down," ventured the new clerk.—Chicago News.

